

Insight driving innovation and impact

Healthy Movers Cornwall Case Study: St Martin's

Embedding physical literacy into the early years' curriculum.

June 2022

spotting, watching caterpillars turn into butterflies, and reading stories about mini-beasts. To complement this, instead of moving like an animal in the Healthy Movers activities, the children moved like mini-beasts, such as butterflies, worms, spiders, snails and grasshoppers.

- The children also have a weather station, which they look at and discuss daily. As part of this, they now incorporate the 'Whatever the Weather' Healthy Mover activities by encouraging the children to do actions for the different weather.
- The setting often tries to link the Healthy Mover activities to a story that they are reading, for example the 'Choo Choo' Healthy Mover activities linked to books that they read about trains.
- The children have also been focusing on healthy eating so they have done the 'Yum Yum' Healthy Mover activities as part of this.

“It's [Healthy Movers] very flexible and there is something for everything.”

(SONYA DRAKE, MANAGER AT ST MARTIN'S NURSERY)

“It feels now like Healthy Movers blends in as part of our routines.”

(SONYA DRAKE, MANAGER AT ST MARTIN'S NURSERY)

“Whatever Healthy Movers card they're doing, all of the other activities in the room and outside are linked to this theme.”

(MEL LUKEY, HEALTHY MOVERS TUTOR)

The Manager of St Martin's Nursery emphasised that Healthy Movers was flexible and it was easy to set the activities up, which has helped them to integrate the activities into their daily routines.

Engaging parents

St Martin's Nursery has sought to engage parents in a number of ways, including: sending the Healthy Movers backpacks home; using online platforms such as Dojo and Tapestry to send messages and photos to parents about Healthy Movers activities; sharing Healthy Movers activities on the notice board at Nursery; and posting on their facebook page. They also put a Healthy Movers resource card in the window of the nursery each week, which shows parents what the children have been doing and encourages them to join in at home. The Manager at St Martin's Nursery highlighted that having simple equipment at home and activities that can be done indoors has been hugely beneficial for parents, especially those that do not have gardens. The children have loved having the Healthy Mover backpacks and equipment to take home too.

Benefits

Enhancing children's physical literacy



Healthy Movers has supported children's physical literacy; the Manager highlighted that the children that have been engaged in Healthy Movers since the start of the year have shown real progress in their physical development, along with an increase in confidence to take part in physical activity. Importantly, Healthy Movers has helped St Martin's Nursery to focus on specific physical skills, such as marching or passing an object around the body; the programme has helped to highlight where children have gaps in physical skills and helped to improve these. As an example, one girl was quite clumsy at the start of the year and was reluctant to try physical activities. Healthy Movers has helped to improve her strength and physical abilities and in turn, her confidence to participate in activities has also increased.

“We didn't realise how many children would find marching difficult and were unable to pass objects behind their backs. Healthy Movers makes us look at different skills.”

(SONYA DRAKE, MANAGER AT ST MARTIN'S NURSERY)

Positively, the children can be seen using their new physical skills in their free-play, for example one child demonstrated his jumping and balancing skills when playing on logs outside. The Healthy Movers Tutor emphasised that prior to Healthy Movers, he was not able to do this. The children also recognise the different movements and can link them to new activities, for example one child recognised that the small 'spider' steps they were doing as part of the 'Jungle Journey' Healthy Mover activities were similar to the 'rain' movements they did as part of the 'Whatever the Weather' Healthy Mover activities.

“Children are already starting to do some of the animal movements in their free play sessions.”

(SONYA DRAKE, MANAGER AT ST MARTIN'S NURSERY)

Supporting children's engagement at nursery



The Manager at St Martin's Nursery highlighted that the biggest success of Healthy Movers has been getting the children all engaged at the same time to do an activity. Prior to Healthy Movers, there would often be one or two children that did not engage in activities but now they all take part. What is more, the Healthy Movers activities are very inclusive so a child with Special Educational Needs (SEN) that attends the nursery is able to take part and children who were initially quite anxious are also joining in. Healthy Movers has also supported children's social skills. For example, at the start, a 3 year old boy struggled to share and had poor social skills. After taking part in Healthy Movers, he is now better at sharing and is more engaged in activities with other children. To support engagement, where possible, the Nursery

tries to divide the children into two groups according to age so that the older children do not overpower the younger ones.

Supporting children's speech and language



Healthy Movers has supported the children with their vocabulary. Children, particularly the three year olds, have learnt new words through the Healthy Movers activities, which they can apply across other activities.

Future

St Martin's Nursery plans to continue delivering Healthy Movers as part of their daily routines and will engage new children that start at the Nursery in September in activities.

Top Tips

- ✓ Build Healthy Movers activities into your curriculum planning; make it work around your planning rather than planning around the Healthy Movers activity. This makes it easier to plan and embed the activities.
- ✓ Respond to the children's interests to encourage them to engage in the activities.
- ✓ Engage with parents in multiple ways to effectively meet their different needs and preferred ways to communicate and receive information.



Youth Sport Trust
SportPark
Loughborough University
3 Oakwood Drive
Loughborough
Leicestershire
LE11 3QF

01509 226600
research@youthsporttrust.org
www.youthsporttrust.org



Registered Charity Number 1086915
Registered Company Number 4180163